

Indiana's Cemetery and Burial Grounds Registry

Both historic cemeteries and prehistoric burial areas are located in our state. Cemeteries are part of our cultural landscape in which more and more citizens are becoming interested. Indiana Code 14-21-1-13.5 authorizes the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA) to create a registry of all cemeteries and burial grounds in each county in Indiana.

The DHPA is in the process of creating a statewide cemetery location registry/database. Knowing the location of as many cemeteries as possible in the state will help provide better protection of these resources. The DHPA will be the lead agency for the creation of the computerized database, as well as the main repository of cemetery related preservation resources. The creation of the database will involve coordination with agencies and organizations such as: historical societies, museums, genealogical groups, archaeologists, private individuals, and many more. Many groups and individuals have undoubtedly already compiled great amounts of resources regarding cemeteries, and through partnerships, we will be able to bring everyone's information together into the statewide database.

The DHPA will have a staff member whose duty it will be to create and maintain this registry database. The immense, advanced, and complex scope of these new duties is a challenge which the Division welcomes, given its, and the public's, strong interest in protecting and preserving these important resources.

It has been stated that "the future of the American cemetery is in doubt, and this generation may be the last to have the opportunity to visit and document these regional and national treasures before they are lost to time and decay" (Brown 1994). Our state will join a growing group of states which have taken on the task of compiling information about the cemeteries within their borders. This project will help insure that future Hoosiers will have a wealth of information to draw on regarding the resting places of those who have gone before.

The Division is committed to helping increase public awareness regarding these sites and their importance. To learn more about the Indiana cemetery registry/database project, or how to become involved, contact:

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Reference: *Soul in the Stone Cemetery Art from America's Heartland* by John Gary Brown, University Press of Kansas, 1994.

